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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 000077

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PROP](#) [PHUM](#) [IZ](#) [FR](#)

SUBJECT: GOF WON'T BE JOINING INTERNATIONAL MISSION FOR
IRAQ ELECTIONS, STRESSES SUPPORT VIA OTHER MEANS

REF: A. 04 STATE 274965

[B](#). 04 PARIS 9098

Classified By: Political Minister-Counselor Josiah Rosenblatt, reasons
1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Poloff reviewed reftel points urging French support for the International Mission for Iraq Elections (IMIE) with MFA Iraq desk officer Bernard Chappedelaine January 5, after delivering reftel points to the GoF December 29. Chappedelaine reported that the GoF did not plan to participate in or offer direct support to the IMIE mission, and stressed that France would channel its contributions via the EU's 30 million euros donation towards Iraqi elections support. He added that, unlike other countries on the IMIE steering committee, France did not have an electoral commission or other suitable independent interlocutor for the IMIE. Chappedelaine cited security concerns as another reason for lack of French participation in the IMIE, despite poloff's emphasis that the IMIE would not be an observer mission in the traditional sense and would be Amman-based with short visits to Iraq (ref a).

[1](#)2. (C) Chappedelaine stressed that, in addition to the EU financial contribution, the GoF was offering other forms of bilateral support for Iraq's elections. As France was one of 14 countries designated for out-of-country (OCV) voting in Iraq's elections, the GoF was working with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to select polling stations and provide statistics on the Iraqi community in France, which numbered in the low thousands. IOM and French MFA and Ministry of Interior officials met for the first time in late December to discuss OCV Iraqi voting in France. Chappedelaine cited as a further example of French elections support a planned GoF program to welcome 14 officials from various Iraqi political parties (ref b for further background) for a familiarization program on the electoral process. The exchange program, which had been originally proposed to last two weeks, had been scaled down to five days, and would overlap with the planned visit of Iraqi Interim Government President Ghazi al-Yawer to Paris January 13-14.

[1](#)3. (C) Comment: The GoF disinclination to contribute personnel to the IMIE is consistent with long-standing GoF reticence on sending additional French personnel, military or otherwise, into Iraq, even on a short-term basis. As long as the security situation in Iraq remains difficult, we expect the GoF to continue to concentrate its modest offers of assistance to Iraq on France-based programs, similar to the January exchange program for political party representatives. End comment.

[1](#)4. (U) Baghdad minimize considered.
Leach